

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the Meeting**

March 22, 2002

11:00 a.m.

Held by telephone conference

Present: Regents President Smith, Regent Vice President Randall, Regent Boyle, Regent Gottschalk, Regent Gracz, and Regent Mohs

Unable to participate: None

Regent President Smith observed that the decision to suspend admissions was made to preserve educational quality. After additional cuts made by the Assembly, that decision proved all the more wise.

Since that time, he reported, information has been assessed to determine how much enrollment capacity remains. In addition, Regents and President Lyall have continued to work with the Governor and Senate leaders. He noted that students and families are anxious and that some campuses are closer to being fully enrolled than others.

While some thought the Board's action was political, Regent President Smith emphasized that it was not. Instead it was prudent management in the face of deep cuts to the budget – 85% of which is composed of the cost of faculty and staff. The admission suspension is accompanied by a hiring freeze.

Turning to what had changed in the budget situation, he reported that Senate Democrats sent to the Regents a message of support and a pledge of the resources needed to admit more students. The Governor also had expressed support, and campuses have heard from legislators who want to restore funding to the UW.

President Lyall reported that chancellors had advised that their campuses could accommodate 5,000 to 5,500 more students if they were assured of the funding needed to serve them. If budget cuts are rolled back further, then more students can be enrolled. The pressure to increase admissions has been amplified by a 10% increase in applications. Based on assurances by the Governor and Senate leaders, she and the chancellors felt comfortable in opening up 5,500 slots, with the caveat that campuses not enroll above their instructional capacity.

Regent President Smith stated the belief that state leaders are sincere in wanting to restore the needed funding.

Concurring that the pause in admissions was needed in order to evaluate the situation, Regent Mohs said he was very pleased that it is possible to admit more students. He expressed confidence that there is a deep well of good feeling and understanding among Assembly Republicans that will become apparent in the Conference Committee.

Regent Randall agreed that the matter should not become mired in partisanship.

Agreeing that admission suspension was the right thing to do, Regent Boyle said it now is time to act in accordance with President Lyall's recommendation. The suspension, he pointed out, resulted from the Board's commitment to educational quality – making sure courses are available and that students are able to graduate in a timely way. Recalling that in the 1980s the UW was overenrolled and students could not get into the courses they needed, he noted that this type of situation must not be repeated. It is necessary to obtain the funding required to support additional students.

Regent President Smith remarked that additional students are beneficial to Wisconsin's future. He recommended maintaining the hiring freeze to guard against budget shortages. If the funding is not forthcoming, he commented, students will not be well served.

President Lyall indicated that the chancellors appreciated the pause in admissions to provide time to assess the situation. She noted that overcrowding will last for at least four years if too many students are admitted at this time.

Regent President Smith asked if President Lyall is comfortable about factoring in the proper yield rate for students who are admitted. Replying in the affirmative, President Lyall said yield rates have been rising and that trend has been taken into account.

Observing that students are relying on the Board, Regent Smith said that those already in the university want quality maintained, and those not yet admitted want to hear from the university as soon as possible. Stating that the temporary admission suspension was good management, he commented that the developments of the last weeks show the

need for more dialogue with the Legislature. The hope is to turn around the trend of declining support that has been ongoing for the last two decades.

Adoption of the following resolution was moved by Regent Smith and seconded by Regent Boyle and Regent Gottschalk:

Resolution 8524:                   The UW System Board of Regents reaffirms its policy of balancing enrollments with available resources to ensure quality and timely education for the students it serves. Based on recent funding assurances by the Governor and Senate majority, and on the recommendation of the UW System President, the Board of Regents authorizes University of Wisconsin institutions to resume their admissions processes and enroll up to, but not beyond, their instructional capacity for fall 2002.

The UW President is directed to monitor systemwide enrollments and report to the Board of Regents on their status. Enrollment targets for fall 2003 and beyond will be reviewed and recalibrated as necessary based on the final UW System funding adopted by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

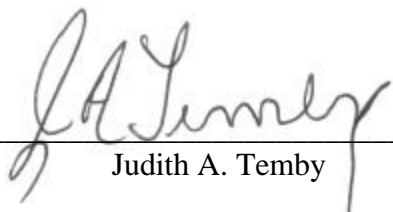
Regent Mohs remarked that there must be agreement among state leaders on how big the University of Wisconsin should be. Noting that many legislators have a deep understanding of the university, he pointed out the need to keep partnering with them as time goes on.

Regent President Smith noted that it is critical for the state to balance the budget and that the UW is willing to do its part.

Regent Gottschalk remarked that the Regents' action to suspend admissions was necessary, but that the byproduct was anxiety on the part of parents and students. He asked that, once admissions are resumed, campuses communicate as quickly as possible with applicants. President Lyall concurred that applicants will be advised of their status promptly.

Put to the vote, Resolution 8524 was adopted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m., upon motion by Regent Gottschalk, seconded by Regent Boyle.

  
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Judith A. Temby

